

## **Message for International Education Week 2009**

Honorable Diane E. Watson, Congressional Representative of the 33rd District of California, and  
Former Ambassador to Micronesia

I am most pleased to join the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of State and colleagues within the U.S. and around the world to celebrate the tenth annual International Education Week 2009 with its theme of “Creating a Vision for a Better Future.”

As a former Ambassador and educator, and currently the Congressional Representative of the 33rd District of California serving on the U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, I recognize that we live in turbulent times. Globalization has created increased opportunities, as well as multidimensional challenges that threaten peace, progress and prosperity in societies around the globe. As nations become increasingly interdependent and intertwined economically, politically and socially, a new world emerges, one which requires new international leadership... leadership that will build bridges of understanding in a world without borders.

That is why I champion education programs that cultivate youth as leaders who are culturally aware, civically responsible, and empowered with 21st century competencies and global understanding. In my district, I have introduced two best practice programs that are transforming teaching and learning for a global society. Both programs use state of the art technologies to link students and educators to each other and the real world by establishing a Global Community of Practice with the commitment of developing NetGeneration of Youth as emerging leaders of a global society.

In 2008, the initial program, “Global NetGeneration of Youth Cyberjournalists Investigate NASA ISS Leaders,” was designed as a demonstration project of the NASA International Space Station National Demonstration Lab. Because the ISS National Lab embodies 21st century values of global cooperation and collaboration, it is a unique resource. It provides opportunities for youth to investigate significant, real world issues, to communicate with inspiring ISS role models, including scientists, engineers, astronauts, inventors, and to practice applying the 21st century global competencies youth need to invent the future. Three high schools: Dorsey High School in Los Angeles, California, Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary, Alberta, Canada and The Academy of Information Technology, Stamford, Connecticut, are collaborating with corporate, government, and community based partners to ensure youth are provided both with a robust, science and technology learning environment, and with an inquiry project based curriculum. This approach has inspired youth around the globe to aspire, to academically achieve, and to pursue career paths in science, technology, engineering and math.

A second pilot project has been launched with the mission of cultivating NetGeneration of Youth as Global Citizens and Ambassadors of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The thematic focus is on engineering, robotics and global environment. Foshay Learning Center in Los Angeles is entering into a three year global sister site agreement with Oude Molen Technical High School in Cape Town, South Africa and core partners, including Global NetGeneration of Youth, SMART Technologies, Inc., Sesame Workshop, and The Khanya Project in South Africa. These partners are committed to designing and implementing collaborative programs which include educator and student exchange, and joint educational activities. Together, international partners will implement programs that inspire youth as the next generation of explorers, scientists, engineers, innovators, and ambassadors shaping a positive future.